

# Arizona 2024

1

<sup>Mon</sup> Dec. 16 9 am dry until Salem then rain  
Eugene 2:30 pm Al + Marilyn Dechter  
we bring enchiladas, marinated chicken breast  
to bake, baked beans, stollen. She provides  
fabulous homemade rugelach and coconut drops.  
we brought stollen but they didn't seem to like it.

<sup>Tues</sup> Dec. 17 9 am ~~dry~~ rain until almost Medford.  
Medford 12:45 Mary Zuchlag (sp?).  
Mary drove me to Ashland, where we walked  
around Lithia Park (forest, stream, ponds, trails)  
and around town to see Guanajuato (sister  
city) mural and historic Ashland Springs Hotel.  
She made marinated chicken skewers, tzatziki,  
pita for dinner + I made salad with cucumber,  
tomato, olives, feta. memorably tasty meal  
we all enjoyed very much!

wed Dec 18

43° 7:20 dry. Gas at Shell near Mary's.  
41° Siskiyou Summit bare + dry. High blanket of light  
grey clouds. Randolph-Collier rest area for ablutions  
& breakfast. Grateful for no fog. Little Shasta <sup>(Black Butte)</sup>  
backlit with orange sunset band. Snow striations.  
Big Shasta shrouded. Sculptured oak. Dinosaur  
sculpture NB.

2

## Winters

Arrive Kathleen Epps in Winters at 1 pm. Richard & mo live on the property. Kathleen is oldest of 6 siblings. Brother James died of cancer from Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Chris, a retired hospice nurse, is a tiny little thing with lung damage from smoking. Lives in Livermore. Husband Mark is very funny. Retired middle school teacher & V.P. who still subs. Mary lives in Livermore, manages properties, & loved working at a hardware store. She seemed a bit neuro-divergent. Made yummy pumpkin bread.

Sue, age 73, is a retired nurse practitioner who worked in women's health. Lived in Portland for 32 years. Now in Alameda to be near her two daughters.

Kathleen ordered chicken, roast beef, mac'ncheese, roasted veggies, & salad, & rolls, and sent us off with a doggie bag & a jar of honey from their bees!

Everyone left around 3. We took 113 & 12 to I-5, missing Sacramento traffic. Arrived at Love's in Santa Nella about 7:30. Stopped at 5:30 for gas & dinner of leftover salad, chicken, beef, & rolls. Tasty, & nice to not have to cook!

Thurs Dec. 19

We parked near the auto pumps, away from trucks, so no idling noise kept us awake. On the road at 7:45. 49° & low overcast gray. Overcast (dust?) & gloomy all the way to Tejon Pass. Couldn't even see mountains. Then blue sky & warm.

Went to urgent care in Santa Clarita to see if they could unblock the wax in my ear. After hydrogen peroxide soak & warm water rinse the wax didn't budge. Have to go to ENT. I was there 5 hours (in urgent care)!

By the end I was almost weeping with boredom from the endless waiting. Finished a book, started another, tried to watch PBS. Nothing held my attention. Realized I didn't eat, drink, or pee for 5 hours! 11:45 - 4:45.

Got gas, then I drove to David's.

The car next to us hit a couch in the road!

LA freeway driving is crazy fast. Hard to see at dusk with oncoming lights right in your eyes. Happy to arrive at David & Annie's at 5:30. They fed us baked potatoes with cottage cheese, feta, parmesan, avocado, broccoli. They rushed off to Ava's school holiday concert. I declined, feeling too wiped from the ear blockage, exhausting

4

## Burbank

day & desperately needing a shower.

Fri Dec. 20

Ava half day school. David worked.  
Grant lunch with Doug ~~Rasmussen~~ Caddigan.  
I walked an hour round trip to Ralph's  
& CVS. Annie made bean quesadillas. 72°.

Sat. Dec. 21

Grant & I went with David to Italian deli for pizza ingredients. The place was packed with holiday shoppers. Got mozzarella pellets, pepperoni, dough. Grant & David also made homemade dough. David & I walked on the gated road above his house. Cat & Maria Haras came around 3 for pizza & to meet David et al. Everyone hit it off. Maria played legos with Ava. Cat wow'd everyone with her knowledge of education & native plants. After filling up on cheese & pepperoni pizzas hot from David's pizza oven, we repaired to the roof deck for s'mores around the firepit & view of Burbank lights. "Cat & Mouse" as

Scottsdale

5

Grant calls them) left at 8. Happy Solstice!

Sunday Dec 22

On the road at 8:30. Hazy day. 210 to 110. Light traffic, few trucks. Arrive at Mom's in Scottsdale at 5 pm. Mom is already crabby + complaining about not getting enough time with everyone who is coming for the holidays. Of course they are all juggling time with other family + with friends. She wishes we were all staying together in one house instead of in three locations. Mark came for dinner of cranberry chicken.

I watched the Kennedy Center Honors with mom (Bonnie Raitt, Grateful Dead, etc.).

Mon Dec 23

Grant is now crabby too. He went walking by himself. I helped mom get Hulu set up on her TV. Gave up on PBS. Walked on trail to Rotary Park. Lots of gas blowers spewing noise, dust, + fumes. David Annie Ava Arthur arrive 5 pm.

Mark, Kelly, Rob, Levi arrive afternoon. Mark + Levi stay for dinner. This after a table groaning with cheeses, dips, + chips. Not to mention eggnog, cookies, etc.

6

Tues Dec 24 76° today

Brunch with sibs at Schmooze in Old Town Scottsdale. On patio with heater at first. Mom sent postcards that dad wrote to us 1969-72 on his travels in Israel and Greece. Poignant. Talked a bit about mom's health & finances, told a few old stories, chatted about life. Been years since just the five of us were together.

Christmas dinner at Denise's. Family photos. Susan et al had to leave for dinner at Ernie's sister's. Annie's sister Veronica joined us with her two boys. She's going thru a divorce & didn't want to be alone.

Fab dinner of roasted brussels sprouts with pancetta & balsamic, au gratin potatoes, green bean casserole, sausage stuffing, prime rib. Pies for desert. 17 people, lots of noise. Grant & I were exhausted & left at 9.

Wed Dec 25 after Ava opened presents.

Walked to park, Veronica here with boys. Too much chaos for me. Grant crabby, me crabby. Every time I'm certain I want out of relationship, he apologizes & is on good behavior for a while.

~~The Denise's at 4. Family photos at 4:30.~~

To Denise's at noon. Brunch of egg casseroles, fruit, veggies. ~~Puzzles~~ Christmas gnome puzzle kept Grant + me busy, and provided some calm amidst the din. Could overhear conversations without as much volume or energy expenditure as participating! The older I get the less I like big groups.

Long walk with Susan, David, Kylie, Lewi, Denise. Chatted with Denise about her Buddha collection. She's not a practicing Buddhist, but like me is intrigued by the philosophy, and finds the iconography calming.

Leftovers for dinner. Yum! Brussels sprouts, au gratin potatoes, etc. I also ate lots of cheesecake! Chilly outside. Brief fireplace time.

Home at 9.

Thurs Dec. 26

Up early to sleeping condo. Coffee, exercises. Walk to Fry's for yeast (for pizza), yogurt, pineapple (for pizza). Grant making pizza dough. Mom at wicked movie. David prepping for pizza party at "Marcellos" (Mark's).

8

Annie + Ava playing Life. Overcast  
+ 57°.

Grant made six batches of pizza dough. I made a salad. To Mark's at four for pizza party. Mark's new yard looked great with new gravel, + fire pit, + furniture (the latter two not new).

Stayed til 9, said goodbye to those I won't see tomorrow (Kelly, Susan, Denise).  
(Emma Casey)

Fri Dec 27

Two walks, shower, hang around. Grant doesn't want to go anywhere and I can't think of anyplace I feel like driving to. Mark, D, Levi, David, Annie, Ava over for dinner. Made breadsticks out of leftover pizza dough.

It took Annie, Grant, mom, + me to figure out how to add the PBS app to mom's TV.

Watched an episode of Holmes v. Doyle.

To bed at 10.

Sat. Dec. 28

Goodbyes + on the road 9:30.



We got sleepy on the 4-hour drive to Redlands & stopped at a rest area to nap. We crashed! Got to Gretchen Stangl's a little after 3. She is recovering from hip replacement surgery. We stayed for 2 hours and could tell that was long enough. ~~She~~ She wasn't feeling up to going out to dinner. We drove to a Mexican place we found online but it was empty & had a bad vibe so we ate at Subway & it was just right.

We're parked for the night at the downtown library, where it's dark & quiet. I walked around downtown to see the lights, tree, and Saturday nightlife. It's a charming town.

Sun Dec 29

Up at 6:30. 44°. A quiet night. Hiway 215 to 15. Patches of heavy fog. Arrive at Colin's at 9 am. 4412 Pescadero, San Diego. It's a sprawling house with 10 bedrooms on a hill above Ocean Beach, with a view of the ocean. Grant napped while Colin & I toured his house & went for a walk. It's a comfortable hippie house with shared kitchen, dining, &

10

sitting areas, porches, garden.

We walked down to the ocean, along Sunset cliffs, then into the charming low rise hippie enclave of Ocean Beach. Grant met us for lunch at La Doñas. Fish tacos for me, birria tacos for him (they gave him terrible heartburn later). \$70 for three of us. Said a sad goodbye to Colin about 1:30. Overcast & chilly. Watched surfers.

Drove to Balboa Park to meet Janet.

The place was absolutely mobbed & parking was a nightmare. We finally gave up & found street parking 1/4 mile away.

Friend Janet used to be a tour guide & showed us the buildings, conservatory (beautifully & recently seismically restored), & the ornament display at the Timken museum. It was quite chilly.

Dinner at Prado restaurant. Lovely (heated) terrace. \$35 entrees. I had turkey soup (creamy, quite good) and shared crab dip with Janet. Very rich. \$34 for me with tip. Grant didn't eat.

Drove Janet back to Mission Bay RV Park, then 30 miles north on a busy I-5 to Aliso Rest Area, arriving about 7:30.

# Sacramento

11

Mon Dec 30

Up 6:30. 52°. Grey sky. Arrive Daniel's storage unit downtown LA (12th & olive) at 8:30 after heavy but not onerous LA traffic. Leave about 9:15. Sky clear over Tejon Pass then foggy. Valley cloudy. Intense crosswind on pass & in valley. Sky clears! Hills are green. It's so much more pleasant & attractive than on the way down.

Dinner at Walmart Subway in Sacramento. Drove another hour to Maxwell rest area, arriving a little after 7. 50°.

Colin working at Motel Del "Ocean Club at the Del" restaurant, teaching fitness classes (he got his personal trainer cert), & occasional acro gigs (\$1200 to perform at casino on NYE). His sublet is up in Feb. & he hopes to move to Saratogo Apts, in DB proper, where many acro friends live.

Tues Dec 31

42° ~~42°~~ at 6:30 am. Quiet night. Trucks separated from cars, so no idling throbs. Beautiful orange sunrise. 7:30 drive to Sacramento NWL, 15 miles away. Magical place. Thousands of birds, clouds of geese wheeling in the air. 6-mile auto loop. White-fronted geese I think was new species for me. Loggerhead shrike, cinnamon teal, many ducks

12

Stopped at viewing platform. Loud gabbling of geese. Chilly day but nice in sun. Great morning light for seeing birds.

Snowgeese visible much closer than Skagit Valley. On ponds instead of in fields.

Two-mile walk for me. Saw a bittern!

Counted about 25 species. Visitor Center closed.

Tear ourselves away at 10:15. Shasta + Lassen both visible, snowcovered. Light traffic. High thin clouds. Rolling Hills gas, exit 628, \$3.39. Lunch at "Smiles" rest area (Herbert S. Miles). Bread, cheese, hummus, veggies, olives. Yum.

Love the oak forests + high plains.

Shasta: white cone against white sky.

Stop at Grocery Outlet in Weed so Grant can look for Smokey Jim's BBQ sauce. No luck. Turns out that ~~main~~ Weed ~~is~~ town is one exit north.

Siskiyou Summit bare + dry, no snow near road, 31°. At 4 pm, near Roseburg, started to rain. Lots of DUI patrol for New Years. Stop at Gittings rest area south of Eugene at 5:30. Dinner same as lunch. Got dark at 5 and visibility in the dark + rain was poor so we

will stay here for the night. 41° & raining.  
Grant wanted to come home thru Bend to buy some used track burner track. But it's very cold there, with snow predicted, and would have been a very cold night. Woke at midnight to a few distant fireworks (explosions).

Wed Jan. 1, 2025

Woke at 6:30 to heavy rain. 40°. Start driving at 7:30. Barely light. Traffic blissfully light - holiday. Rain stops 8:30. Home 1:10 pm.